



YSMHL League Realignment Announcement – 2025-2026 Season

The York Simcoe Minor Hockey League (YSMHL) is pleased to announce a significant update aimed at enhancing the experience for our players, families, and organizations. As part of our continued effort to reduce travel time and associated costs, the league will undergo a structural realignment beginning with the **2025-2026 season**.

After careful discussion and collaboration with all member centres, a new **divisional format** has been approved. This realignment is based on geography and will foster more localized play, while still preserving the competitive integrity of the league.

Divisional Structure – Effective 2025-26 Season

Starting in the 2025-26 season, YSMHL will operate with **two divisions**:

- North/West Division
- South/East Division

These divisions have been organized to reflect the relative geographic locations of our member centres. This new structure is designed to streamline scheduling, minimize long-distance travel, and create a more balanced and sustainable league format.

Please note: Divisional assignments may be subject to change depending on final team entries. If necessary, adjustments will be made to ensure both divisions are appropriately balanced in terms of team count, competition level, and executive discretion.

Preliminary Divisional Breakdown

North/West Division

- Barrie
 - Collingwood (A or AA depending on team)
 - Orillia (A team)
 - Georgian Bay (Penetang/Midland A team)
 - TNT
 - South Simcoe
 - Orangeville
 - Caledon
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South/East Division

- Markham
- Richmond Hill
- Stouffville
- Aurora
- Newmarket
- King
- Upper York

Regular Season Format

The 2025-26 regular season will consist of **26 games** per team, structured as follows:

- **One cross-divisional game** against each team from the opposite division.
- The remaining games will be **within the division**, promoting local rivalries and reducing travel.
- Cross-divisional travel will be limited to **one away game every two years**.
 - **For example:** *In Year 1, Barrie will travel to play games against teams in the South/East Division such as Markham, Richmond Hill, Stouffville, and Aurora. At the same time, Newmarket, King and Upper York will travel to Barrie for their cross-divisional matchups. In Year 2, this rotation will reverse—Barrie will host Markham, Richmond Hill, Stouffville, and Aurora, while Barrie will travel to Newmarket, King and Upper York..*

This rotation ensures that while travel is minimized, teams still have the opportunity to compete against all member centres prior to the playoffs.

Post season Format – YSMHL Qualifier Round

Following the regular season (concluding mid-February 2026), all teams will enter the **YSMHL Qualifier Round**. This phase of competition determines playoff advancement and will follow this format:

- All teams will be **ranked 1 through 14**, regardless of division, based on their total regular season points.
 - Teams will be placed into **qualifier pools**, based on seeding.
 - Each team will play a **home-and-home series** against others in their pool (4 to 8 games total, depending on pool size).
 - This system is designed to reward higher-performing teams by placing them in advantageous positions for playoff advancement.
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Advancement to Semi-Finals:

- The **winners of each pool** will move on to the **YSMHL Semi-Finals**.
- In age groups with only **two qualifier pools**, the **top two teams** from each division (by regular season standings) will advance to the Semi-Finals.

Playoff Structure

- The **YSMHL Semi-Finals and Championship Series** will begin in **early March** and be completed during **March Break**.
- Both the Semi-Finals and Championship rounds will be a **best-of-three series** (2 out of 3).

YSMHL Presidents Cup

Teams that do not advance to the Semi-Finals will conclude their season by competing in the **YSMHL Presidents Cup**:

- This event provides a meaningful conclusion to the season and a chance for teams to finish on a strong note.
- The Presidents Cup will run through **the end of March**, but **will not include games during March Break**.

We believe this realignment and revised structure will lead to a better-balanced league, reduced travel burdens, and a more rewarding competitive experience for all involved.

Thank you to all member centres for your cooperation and support in making these positive changes for our league community.

If you have any questions, please contact your local YSMHL representative or reach out to the league executive.

Catherine Rawn
President
York Simcoe Minor Hockey League
